

Dec. 19, 2018 (*trimmed*)

I'm Dave Burton. I'm an IPCC Expert Reviewer, I've published in the academic literature on sea-level rise, I was appointed to the NC Sea Level Rise Impact Study Advisory Committee, I'm a member of the CO2 Coalition, a Board Member and Science Advisor to NC-20, and I created the SeaLevel.info web site, which has the best sea-level analysis tools on the Internet.

The main obstacle to this Council doing constructive work is politics.

Climate science is so politicized and commercialized that much of what you hear is nonsense.

For instance, you've heard there's a scientific consensus that CO2 emissions help warm the planet, and that's true. But do you realize there's no consensus that it's harmful?

In fact, the best evidence is that manmade climate change is benign, and CO2 emissions are beneficial, for both mankind and natural ecosystems. I'm one of over 30,000 American scientists who've signed a "petition" attesting to that fact.

CO2 is "plant food." Some of you might remember when terrible famines were often in the news, in places like Bangladesh. Famine was one of the great scourges of humanity, the third Horseman of the Apocalypse.

But famines are becoming rare, and one of the reasons is rising CO2 levels, which have increased worldwide agricultural productivity by about 20%.

Those benefits are well-measured, by thousands of agricultural studies. The supposed harms are just hypothetical.

Direct impacts of global warming are obviously negligible. We're on track for at most about one degree Celsius of warming by 2100, probably less. That's like moving about 70 miles south, or planting one week later.

So folks promoting solar and wind boondoggles hype other supposed harms, like sea-level rise, or extreme weather, or polar bears. But those problems aren't actually happening.

CO2 has been rising steadily for 2/3 of a century, yet sea-level rise has not accelerated, hurricanes are not worsening, strong tornadoes actually declined, and the polar bears are fine.

We should not try to reduce carbon emissions. But there are things we should do.

We should play to our strengths. NC State has a top-five nuclear engineering program, better than Georgia Tech, or any California school. We should support that work, and encourage development of innovative nuclear power technologies, like thorium, and molten-salt reactors, for reliable, affordable base-load power generation, to free the world from its reliance on fossil fuels – which wind and solar can never do.

If you have any questions, I'm available after the meeting, or call me anytime.

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